



**U.S. Department of State**  
**Bureau of Educational and Cultural**  
**Affairs**  
**Private Sector Exchange**



February 1, 2022

Dear Au Pair:

Welcome to the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program, BridgeUSA. During your stay in the U.S., you will enhance your skills and expertise and you will make connections and memories that will last a lifetime. Your participation empowers you to represent your country as a 'citizen ambassador', where you will help create new and lasting relationships between our two nations.

As an au pair, you are part of a U.S. Department of State cultural exchange program in which you, like thousands of other au pairs from around the world, will have the opportunity to share your language, culture, and customs with your American host family and your host community. We want you to have a meaningful and successful experience. As you meet new people and experience new personal and professional challenges, you will have the opportunity to learn about the United States, its values, and its people.

Your U.S. program sponsor, identified on your Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Program (J-1) Status, is your first point of contact throughout your stay in the United States. If you have any questions about your exchange program, if you need assistance of any kind while you are here, or if something just does not feel right to you, immediately contact your U.S. program sponsor at the telephone number in your orientation material. This telephone number should be available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you have concerns or issues that your U.S. sponsor has not resolved, or you find you cannot reach your sponsor, please contact the Department of State through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline (1-866-283-9090), which is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or by e-mail at [JVisas@state.gov](mailto:JVisas@state.gov). Your sponsor and the Department of State are here to ensure your success and safety on the program. Please add the [jvisas@state.gov](mailto:jvisas@state.gov) email address to your contacts to ensure you receive important communications from the Department.

As exciting and enriching as international exchange can be, it may present challenges. The Department of State's concern for your health, safety, and welfare includes your mental health. There are many resources available to help deal with mental health issues. Please reach-out to <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help> for immediate help. BridgeUSA also has other available resources on our website, [www.j1visa.state.gov](http://www.j1visa.state.gov), for you to check out.

As an au pair on a BridgeUSA program, you will receive future emails regarding alumni opportunities with over one million current and former exchange visitors. We welcome you to join the International Exchange alumni website – a place where past and present U.S. visitors find tools to advance their communities and our world. You can read more at: <https://alumni.state.gov/>.

We are pleased that you made the decision to be part of this amazing program. I hope you enjoy your stay in the United States.

Sincerely,

Nicole Elkon  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Private Sector Exchange